



1930 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59601
406-457-8900
www.LewisAndClarkHealth.org
publichealth@lccountymt.gov

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Contact: Laurel Riek, Environmental Health Specialist, 406-447-8361

Gayle Shirley, Communications Manager, 406-457-8908

54 Local Eateries Recognized for Commitment to Food Safety

Lewis and Clark Public Health (formerly the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department) has recognized 54 local food establishments for their exceptional efforts to make, serve, and sell safe food to the public.

Environmental health specialists presented 13 Gold and 41 Silver Fork Awards during a ceremony Tuesday. The winning establishments are listed below.

This is the fourth year the public health department has offered the awards. Although the total number of awards was lower than last year, the number of Gold Fork Awards reached a new record. The previous record of 10 was set last year.

“It’s wonderful to see a growing number of Gold Fork Award winners,” said Laurel Riek, environmental health specialist with the health department. “These are establishments that have demonstrated an effective food safety system that reduces or eliminates the risk of foodborne illness.”

To be eligible for an award, a food establishment must offer sit-down dining and have been open for at least a year. The awards are based on the results of unannounced inspections conducted in 2014 by environmental health specialists in the public health department. This year, 191 facilities were eligible for awards.

To win a Gold Fork Award, a food establishment must show evidence of a system that is beyond the minimum standards established in state rules, Riek said. This includes having:

- On-site managers who demonstrate knowledge of food safety and take corrective action when necessary;
- Food-safety training for all staff;
- Employee health policies;
- Procedures to maintain safe food temperatures; and
- Standard operating procedures.

To win a Silver Fork Award, an establishment must demonstrate elements of at least three of these four components of an effective food safety system.

“The purpose of these awards is to publicly recognize facilities that are working hard to set food safety systems in place that protect their customers,” Riek said. “It’s hard work to get and maintain this award.”

Riek noted that inspections are a snapshot in time, not necessarily a reflection of how an establishment does business on a day-to-day basis. That’s why the awards focus on having systems and processes in place.

“If you’re consistently using a system,” Riek said, “you’re much more likely to have excellent food safety practices.”

For more information, contact Public Health at 447-8351 or healthinfo@lccountymt.gov.

Gold Fork Awards Winners:

- Apple-Rehab West (Cooney Home)
- Capital High School Cafeteria
- Capital High School Main Kitchen
- East Valley Middle School, East Helena
- Eastgate School, East Helena
- Hawthorne School
- Helena High School
- Intermountain Children’s Home
- Kessler School
- Lincoln School
- Pizza Hut, 3267 N. Montana
- Radley School, East Helena
- Smith School

Silver Fork Award Winners:

- Applebees
- Arby’s Restaurant
- Augusta Dinner Club, Augusta
- Augusta Public Schools
- Benny’s
- Bryant School
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- C Bar N Mission, Augusta
- Costco Food Court
- Dairy Queen, 1500 Prospect
- Days Inn
- Early Bird Cafe
- Emiliano’s
- Four Georgians School
- Green Meadow Country Club
- Hardee’s, 1919 E. Custer

- Hardee's, 320 Euclid
- Helena Dinner Club
- Helena Middle School
- Hunters Pointe Retirement Residence
- Jefferson School
- Jim Darcy School
- Lincoln Dinner Club, Lincoln
- Lincoln School, Lincoln
- Masonic Home of Montana
- McDonald's Restaurant, 3060 N. Montana
- McDonald's Restaurant, 1901 Prospect
- Ray Bjork Learning Center
- Real Food Store
- Rossiter School
- Shodair Residential Treatment Center
- St. Peter's Hospital
- Starbucks, 608 N. Main St.
- Subway, 1822 E. Custer Ave.
- Taco Bell
- Taco Del Sol
- Taco John's, 1450 Prospect
- Taqueria El Vaquero
- Target Food Avenue Express
- Warren School
- Wolf Creek School